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Where there's a Will, there's a way

Duxbury rower makes national team

GateHouse News Service
Will Miller, a 25-year-old Northeastern graduate from Duxbury, was named to the 2009 U.S. World Championship Rowing Team.

Miller, along with his teammates Glen Ochal of Philadelphia, Sam Stitt of McLean, Va., and Elliot Hovey of Manchester-By-The-Sea, began competing in the men's quadruple sculls in Poznan, Poland, an event that runs through this Sunday (Aug. 30).

"I was thrilled to find out that I had earned a seat in the quad," Miller said. "There will be a lot of good boats with a lot of experience at the World Championships, but we're hoping that our hard work will pay off, and we'll come home with a good result in the end."

Miller's participation in the Duxbury Bay Maritime School rowing program with coach Tom Tiffany provided his first real experience as a rower.

In 2000, Miller enrolled in Northeastern University. From then on his college experience was defined by his involvement with its rowing program.

"Outside of classes while most of my non-rower friends were sleeping in or out having a good time, we would be grinding away out on the Charles or in the basement of the athletic facility," Miller said. "We put in a lot of hard work, but that was all part of the enjoyment."

Following the completion of

his fourth year rowing for the Huskies, Miller competed in the 2006 Under-23 World Championships in Hazewinkel, Belgium.

There, he placed sixth in the coxed four, a boat with four rowers and a coxswain, the person in charge of steering the boat and coordinating the rhythm of the rowers.

After graduating from Northeastern, Miller moved to the West Coast to train with the California Rowing Club in Oakland.

There he teamed up with Australian coach Tim McLaren, who has since become the U.S. Men's National Team head coach.

"I really liked what coach McLaren was doing, and could easily see that it was a really high level program," Miller said.

He then began his transition from a sweep oarsman, using only one oar, to a sculler, using two.

Within the past year, the CRC has become a National Team Training Center, due in large part to McLaren's skill as coach and the program's popularity.

"It's really nice to know that you can trust his program and his coaching. Having Tim as a coach has really been instrumental in getting to where I am today," Miller said.

"Not only that, but also being able to train with Olympians and some of the best rowers in

the country every day has been a great opportunity."

Miller cites the biggest challenge in transitioning from college rowing as the difficult training schedule to which he now must adhere.

"We practice twice a day most days for up to three hours a practice. We put in a lot of miles on the water and also do a good amount in cross training and weights."

After spending a year in California, Miller participated in the National Selection Regatta (NSR) in Princeton, N.J. There, the top scullers and rowers go into a selection camp, competing head-to-head in order to earn a spot on the team.

After being selected for the U.S. World Championship Rowing Team, he and his teammates traveled to England for the Royal Henley Regatta and then to Switzerland for the 3rd World Cup, where Miller gained the experience of racing internationally as preparation for the World Championships in Poland.

Miller credits his initial interest in the sport to his father, Bill Miller, who rowed for Northeastern in the 1960s and also for the U.S. National Team.

Miller will be representing the United States as a member of one of six boats competing in the 2009 U.S. World Championships.